Briefing Sheet

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Water and Climate Center

Soil Moisture / Soil Temperature (SM/ST) Pilot Project

Issue Area

Develop a standardized and coordinated system to collect, interpret, and archive soil climatic data

What's the Challenge?

- Provide national automated soil moisture-soil temperature network for resource assessment and planning.
- To resolve existing technical challenges associated with site installation, sensor design, sensor interfaces, and data management concerns
- To assess existing non-NRCS networks to determine what types of soil/climate information is already available
- To integrate and make the data available to a wide variety of users

What We Are Doing?

- Disseminating data via the world wide web and delivering technical papers
- Developing new standards and specifications for installation, maintenance, and data delivery
- Completing the last two years of the 10 year pilot project, working out the technical challenges of a nationwide network
- Developing cooperative agreements to develop sound data quality control procedures
- Working with partners to meet and clarify data needs
- Assessing existing networks for data availability and accessibility

Status

- Remote operations for 21 pilot project sites in 19 states remains excellent
- Conservation planners are requesting SM/ST data and additional climate information from remote sites
- A Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) budget initiative for the operational phase of the SM/ST pilot project has been submitted
- Cooperative agreements between federal and state partners to obtain existing soil/climate data are being developed
- New SCAN sites in selected areas with partners are being installed

What's Left?

- Obtain NRCS and partner support and resource commitment to begin implementation of SCAN
- Close-out the SM/ST pilot project
- Provide assistance to partners upon request